

ABSTRACT

Joe A1 The present invention will determine a ranked list of assignees that are likely candidates for licensing a source patent portfolio. The assignees are picked from a set of patents that is related or associated with the source patent portfolio and have not already been licensed. A set of associated patents is determined that are associated or related with a source patent portfolio. For example, the set of associated patents could contain patents having "backwards" references (*i.e.*, patents cited as a reference by a patent in the source patent portfolio), "forwards" references (*i.e.*, patents that cite as a reference one of the patents in the source patent portfolio), or "shared" references (*i.e.*, patents that cite as reference at least one of the references cited by a patent of the source patent portfolio). Furthermore, the set of associated patents could be expanded upon by applying the same reference analysis to the current set of associated patents to add patents thereto that are relevant. This process can be done recursively to a specified number of levels or otherwise be stopped according to a specific criteria (*e.g.*, certain number of patents, etc.). A list of all the assignees in the set of associated patents is determined and those assignees that are already licensed or for some other reason can be readily eliminated are subtracted from the list. The list of assignees (*e.g.*, remaining assignees) is then organized according to a ranking criteria and presented to the user.

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